

REMARKS

The present invention relates to a production method of a dehydration reaction product.

Preliminarily, it is appreciated that in the Office Action of June 14, 2005, the Examiner has withdrawn the previous rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and has allowed claims 1, 3-6, 9, 13, 14, 18, and 19. Furthermore, it is appreciated that the Examiner has indicated claims 16 and 20-22 as allowable, although presently objected to for dependence on rejected claims. The sole remaining rejection is the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on the Hirata reference.

Claim 10 is amended herein for clarification, including to indicate the presence and functioning of the condenser and the presence of the opening in the feeding pipe in the gaseous phase section comprising one or a plurality of holes on the side face of the feeding pipe. These amendments are supported by the disclosure in the specification, e.g., at page 34, line 33 - page 35, line 2, of the specification, and by claim 21.

Claim 16 is amended to eliminate dependency on claim 10. Therefore, claim 16 now depends only on claims which have already been indicated as allowed, and is now clearly in condition for immediate allowance also.

Claim 21 has been cancelled.

Lastly, new claim 23 has been added, based on combination of claims 10 and 16.

The foregoing amendments do not introduce new matter, nor any new issue.

With respect to the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Hirata, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 10 herein distinguishes over and is unobvious in view of the Hirata reference. The distinction is further explained below.

The Examiner, noting pipe 141 in Fig 1 of Hirata, indicated that a feeding pipe having openings in the gaseous phase section and in the liquid phase section of the water separator is contemplated by Hirata.

As described on page 34, lines 33-35 of the specification, the feeding pipe connected with the reaction vessel is a piping for feeding the distillate from the reaction vessel into the water separator and the reaction vessel is generally connected with the water separator via the condenser. The condenser is equipped between the reaction vessel and water separator for condensation of distillate.

To clarify the difference between the feeding pipe of the present claim 10 and pipe 141 in Fig 1 of Hirata, claim 10 has been amended herein.

The feeding pipe of amended claim 10 has the openings in the gaseous phase section and in the liquid phase section. As described on page 34, lines 24-32 of the English specification, the liquid distillate is fed to the water separator through that opening in the liquid phase section of the feeding pipe while the gaseous distillate is discharged through the opening in the gaseous phase section, so that the pressure in the liquid phase section of the water separator can be suppressed from changing, whereby the effects of the present invention can effectively be produced. Also, as described on page 35, lines 20-32 of the English specification, when the opening of said feeding pipe in the gaseous phase section comprises one or a plurality of holes made on the side face of said feeding pipe, it becomes possible to sufficiently suppress the pressure change of the liquid phase section within the water separator.

These effects will not be produced when the opening of pipe 141 of Hirata, which is the pipe for providing solvent obtained after removal of water from the distillate to reaction vessel, would be in contact with a liquid at some portions of time and in contact with the gaseous phase at the other portions of time.

In Hirata, pipe 129 appears to correspond to the feeding pipe of the present invention. However, Hirata fails to disclose or suggest openings in pipe 129 in both the gaseous phase portion and the liquid phase portion.

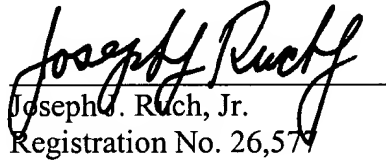
Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be taught or motivated to derive the presently claimed invention based on the teachings of Hirata.

Accordingly, present claim 10 is patentable over Hirata, and the rejection should now be withdrawn, and claims 1, 3-6, 9-10, 13-14, 18-20, and 22-23 should be allowed forthwith.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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